

KNOWING THE LORD THROUGH PARDONED SIN NO. 2006

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JANUARY 29, 1888,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying,
Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest
of them, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
Jeremiah 31:34.*

TRUE knowledge of God is a covenant blessing. To know Jehovah as the only living and true God, to know Him personally and intimately, so as to say with David, "You are my God"—this is one of the choice blessings of the covenant of grace which grace bestows upon all the chosen. In this prophecy, Jehovah declares that He will yet give this knowledge to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah; and this is our hope for the long-wandering seed of Abraham, whom He will yet restore and save.

If we regard the passage before us as instructive in its order, the knowledge of God follows closely upon the application of the law to the heart. Read, "After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people . . . and they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord." The work of grace usually begins, so far as we can perceive it, by the Holy Spirit's bringing the law into contact with the inner man. The law outside of a man is forgotten, he may profess a reverence for it, but it does not affect his desires and thoughts. But when the Holy Spirit begins to put the law into the inward parts, the immediate result is the discovery of our shortcomings and transgressions. The more the man's heart sees the perfect holiness of the law of God, the more he perceives his own unholiness and impurity. He sets his own conduct in contrast with the divine righteousness, and he is overwhelmed with shame, sorrow, and dismay. He feels that if God should mark iniquities, he could not stand in His presence; yes more, that if the Lord at once condemned him, He would be just. Law-work is grace-work in its darker dress. It is the axe which rough-hews the timber which grace goes on to fashion and smooth. By the operation of the law upon the conscience, convincing the man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, the Holy Spirit, works towards the transforming of the heart. He takes away the stone out of it, and makes it to be a fleshy, tender, sensitive thing. Then with His own finger He writes the divine law upon the mind and the affections, so that the divine commands become the center of the man's life, and the governing force of his action. The man now loves that law which before he, at his very best, only feared; it becomes his will to do the will of God. By a miracle of grace his nature is changed, so that its tendencies, which were all towards evil, are corrected by new tendencies, which are all towards good. Now is the law of God indeed glorious, for it rules by love. It was terrible when written on those tablets of stone which Moses dashed to pieces, but its radiance is like that of a pearl most precious, when it gently influences our manhood from the central throne of the heart. It is now written on a tablet which will endure throughout eternity, for it is engraved upon an immortal spirit.

As the law is written on the heart, a manifestation is made of God Himself. The man is made to know himself, to know God's law, and thus he is led to know the Lord. Now he acquaints himself with God, and is at peace.

Of this gracious knowledge of the Lord I am going to speak this morning. This is to be our first head—the *one essential knowledge*, "They all shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord." The second head equally arises out of the text; it is *the one grand means of obtaining this essential knowledge*. The text tells us how this knowledge is imparted by the Lord, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." When we receive pardon from the hands

of God, then we know Him indeed, for, as Zacharias said in his song, our Lord Jesus has come “to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins.”

I. To begin with, then, we have here, first of all, THE ONE ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE. It is a great truth that, “This is life eternal, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” To know God is to live in the light. This knowledge brings with it trust, peace, love, holiness, and acceptance. Do not read this passage as some do, and tear it up by its roots, and then use it as if it were a prophecy of the universal spread of religion. Do not dream of a day when we shall not need to teach our brother and our neighbor the great truths of our holy faith; at any rate, the text before us says nothing of the kind. This prophecy is to be read as it stands, and in its own connection. In the first place, as we have already said, it relates to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. At the present time these have forgotten the Lord as to a true spiritual worship of Him, for they have rejected the Messiah, in whose face God’s glory is seen; this nation is to be brought back to its best estate; both portions of it shall be converted, and shall come under a new covenant of a very different tenor from that which their fathers so wantonly broke. The Lord will gather the remnant of Israel under a covenant of grace, by which He will work in them those things which under the old covenant He justly required of them. Under this covenant of grace they are to have their hearts inscribed with His law; Jehovah is to be their God, and they are to be His people. Then shall they in very deed know the Lord as their fathers knew Him in the days of Elijah, when the fire fell from heaven, and they cried, “Jehovah, He is the God. Jehovah, He is the God.” Whatever else these converts shall not know, they shall know Jehovah, “from the least of them unto the greatest of them.”

Refer the passage to the spiritual Israel, as you justly may, and you learn that when God deals with men in a way of grace, and impresses obedience upon their nature, then they all know Him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. The universality of the text extends to all those who come under the new covenant, and are renewed in heart; these without exception know the Lord, and there is no need that they be instructed upon that important point. These people know the Lord, and never can forget Him; henceforth they are no more strangers to Him, but sojourners with Him.

Let us consider this knowledge, that we may see what it is. And to begin with, *it is emphatically the knowledge of God*, “They shall all know *Me*.” They may not know everything about God. Who could? Who knows the Lord in that sense but the Lord Himself? Only the infinite can comprehend the infinite. The intellectual comprehension of the attributes of God is beyond us; how, then, could we grasp His essence? The regenerate, however, knows the Lord, though they do not, and cannot, understand His incomprehensible glories. They may not know a great many things which they would like to know, critical, scientific, historical, theological, spiritual, and eternal, but these matters are not spoken of in this place. One form of knowledge is mentioned and only one, “They shall all know *Me*, says Jehovah.”

Observe, that the prophet speaks not of knowing facts about God, nor truths as to what God is, or has done, or will do—it is knowing God Himself. Do you not perceive the difference? I may know, and I do know, a great deal about a certain renowned person; say, if you please, Prince Bismarck. I have read his biography, and I think I have some sort of an idea of his personal character; thus I know something about him. But if you were to ask me, “Do you know him?” I should at once answer, “No, I have not even seen him, I have never spoken with him, nor written to him, nor held any other communication with him, and therefore I cannot say that I know him.” Now, if this solemn question were passed round these pews, “Do you know God?” how would you answer it? Many would reply, “We have read the Scriptures, and so we know the attributes of God, and we remember with great reverence all that God has done, and promised to do, but still we cannot say that we know Him. Can anyone say as much as that?” Let me break up the question: Have you ever spoken with God? Did He ever speak with you? Believers can say, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father,” can you say *that*? Were you ever conscious of the presence of God? Has He ever manifested Himself to you in any special way? Alas! Many a very knowing man must honestly confess that he does not know the Lord in the sense contained in my questions. Even among professing Christians this may be sadly true, even as Paul said to the Corinthians, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” The knowledge here spoken of is to know the Lord Himself, not to know that there is a God,

and that Jehovah alone is God, and that He is to be had in reverence of them that are round about Him, but to know *Him*. We have such a tendency to run away from the personality of God. Take an instance; godly people say, "I know in whom I have believed," but this is not what Paul said. He declared, "I know whom I have believed." He knew the person He trusted. He was personally acquainted with Jesus Christ. This is true godliness; personal acquaintance with a personal God. This is a grand support of faith. One said to a Christian lady that he did not believe in the Scriptures, and she replied that she believed in them, and delighted to read them. When asked her reason, she replied, "Perhaps it is because I know the author." Personal acquaintance with God turns faith into assurance. The knowledge of God is the basis of a faith of the surest and sweetest kind; we know and have believed the love which God has towards us. Knowing God, we believe in the truth of His words, the justice of His sentences, the goodness of His acts, the wisdom of His purposes, yes and the love of His chastisements. When a renewed heart truly knows God, it has no further quarrel with Him, or with anything that He does or says. The cry is, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seems Him good." Thus to know God is eternal life. Let us return to the question—Do we know the Lord? Harken, my hearers. Has the Lord ever been so near you as to make you say, "How dreadful is this place"? Did your flesh ever tremble, and your lips quiver, at His voice? Do you know the feeling which overcame the prophet Habakkuk when he trembled in himself? Then I know that you are sure beyond all other certainty of your previous life, that God is, and that He deals with men. Do you know the Lord in this way? I put this question to each one. Have you ever spoken to Him? Is it your habit to open your heart to Him? Do you tell Him all your secrets? I mean by this nothing bordering on fanaticism or superstition, but in sober earnestness I ask—Is God real to you? Is He as real to you as she that lies in your bosom, or as the friend who walks with you by the way? Is the invisible God as real to you as any person that you can see, as much an actual fact as any substance which you can feel? Has the Lord ever spoken to your soul? I will not put any special question about the medium of that speech. It may be, He has spoken through this Book, or through His minister, or by "a still small voice" within your soul—but has the Eternal One ever spoken with you? O my hearers, are you on speaking terms with your God? If not, you cannot be said to know Him, and if you do not know Him, you are not among the renewed in heart, for of them the Lord says in this Scripture, "They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

Note, dear friends, in the next place, that it is *a personal knowledge*. Each renewed person knows the Lord for himself. You cannot know God except for yourself. If I am asked whether I know such a person, it would be idle to answer, "Well, my brother knows him." That would be an admission that I did not myself know him. If the question were repeated, "Do *you* know him?" it would be folly to reply, "Well, I have a cousin who sometimes dines with him." That is not the question. So with regard to God. No second-hand knowledge can be admitted here. You cannot know God through other people, and why should you wish to do so? Is not personal knowledge the most to be desired? Did not Job rejoice that when he should rise from the dead he should behold his Redeemer, and this was the essence of his joy—"Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." He would not have wished to see his Redeemer with another's eyes, nor that the vision should be his only by proxy. It is for our own lips to drink at the fountainhead of love, and for our own eyes to look unto the Lord. No imaginary reception of grace by a sponsor can save, or even satisfy. You cannot see God with another man's eyes; you cannot know God through another man's knowledge. O my hearers, you must yourselves be born again! You must yourselves be made pure in heart, or you cannot see God. Personal religion and individual knowledge of God are indispensable. Come, my hearer, what have you to say to this?

Next, this knowledge is one which is *worked in us by the Spirit of the Lord*. It is the duty of every Christian man to say to his neighbor, and to his brother, "Know the Lord." It is the instinct of a new-born child of God to try and tell out what he knows. God uses this effort as His instrumentality for saving men. But the man, who really knows the Lord, does not know Him solely by such instruction. This may be the means used, but the knowledge obtained comes from a higher source than brother or neighbor. All Zion's children are taught of the Lord. They know God by His revealing Himself to them. You may know what the preacher can tell you, and yet you may know nothing aright. You may know what this Book can tell you, and yet if the Holy Spirit has not quickened you to perceive the living truth with-

in the Book, you know nothing truly. We may stand and preach, dear friends, until our tongues are worn away, and this inspired page may lie open before you until the ink is blanced, and yet you, hearers and readers, may never know the Lord; yes, I am sure you never will unless the Spirit shall show Him unto you. You cannot know a man by hearing and reading of him, you must deal with himself. God, through Himself, you must each one know; there is no other way of truly knowing Him. When Peter confessed Christ, you remember how the Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you." You may know a great deal intellectually by the teaching of men, but heart-knowledge, the knowledge which is peculiar to God's elect, you can never receive except by the teaching of the Lord. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall teach you all things." Is not that a fulfillment of the old promise, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord"? Those whom God teaches are taught indeed, but neither nature, nor art, nor the will of man, can supply the place of this heavenly instruction.

Beloved, true believers *know* God, because God has revealed Himself to them. Let me assure you, the receivers of this personal teaching cannot be bamboozled by the doubts and denials of men. False prophets would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, but it is not possible that the elect should be deceived, for they have internal evidence which carnal reason cannot shake. They commune with the Most High God, and the secret of the Lord is with them, and consequently their hearts are fixed. What we have heard and seen, we testify, and if men receive not our witness, it is none the less sure to our own hearts.

It is not possible for our faith to be destroyed if it is indeed the work of the Holy Spirit, for that which God does shall be forever. The faith your mother gave you, your stepmother may take away from you; the religion which you inherited from your father may be sold off with the old furniture of the house; that which man gives, man may take away. But that which the Holy Spirit implants in us, all the devils in hell cannot pluck up. The inscription of the Spirit of God upon that heart which He has turned into flesh it is not possible for all the powers of darkness to erase. Knowledge given by the Spirit is clear, definite, personal, assured, positive, and therefore precious. We grow more and more persuaded as our experience ripens.

The truth which has been burned into us as with a red hot iron by the operations of the Spirit of God becomes a vital portion of ourselves.

Note carefully, that this knowledge of God becomes *manifest knowledge*. It is so manifest that the most earnest workers who desire the conversion of their fellowmen no longer say to such a man, "Know the Lord," for they perceive most clearly that he already possesses that knowledge, so as to be beyond the need of instruction upon that point.

There are many truths, beloved brethren, which I feel always bound to teach to you so long as I am the pastor of this flock, but if I had an unmixed company gathered of regenerated men and women, I should not think of saying to you, "Know the Lord," for I should be sure that you all knew Him, from the least even to the greatest. We assume the presence of this knowledge when we preach to God's people; we take it for granted that they know the Lord, and therefore, we do not again lay this foundation. A godly man's life is such that we perceive that he knows the Lord. The absence of this becomes equally clear in many of the ungodly. When men commit a crime, the indictment often runs, "not having the fear of God before his eyes." You can tell when a man has not the fear of God before his eyes, and you can tell when a man has that fear of God. Brethren, if you watch him, and especially if you live with him, you will perceive when a person has knowledge of God. A mighty something operates upon him, checking or stimulating, cheering or calming him. Hear him as he wrestles in prayer. Stand outside the door, and you will soon perceive that an invisible One is with him. This unseen somebody is everybody to this man, and you can see it. Mark him when he gets into trade. He might take an unfair advantage, but he scorns it. Does he not want money? Yes, badly. But he has respect to One whom others cannot see. By a word of falsehood he might profit largely; he will not speak it. Why? "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord." All who have been renewed in spirit, and have had God's law written upon the fleshy tablets of their heart, manifest to a greater or less degree that they know the Lord, and therefore their brethren perceive it, and cease to teach them what they are sure they know.

Next, *this knowledge of God is universal among the regenerate*. It is not universal among the sons of Adam, for multitudes know not God, and have no dealings with Him! But all those who are under the covenant of grace know the Lord. Brethren, it would be a doubtful child that did not know its own father. All the boys and girls at home differ in knowledge; the big boy is going to the university soon, and the eldest girl has taken a degree at the Oxford Examination; but yonder little child who does not know his letters yet, still knows his father. Does he not? Oh, how glad he is when Father comes home in the evening! Yes and God's children know their Father. Moreover, we all know the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. Whatever else I do not know, I can say—

*“Jesus, my God, I know His name;
His name is all my trust”*

We know Jesus Himself, and dwell in Him! We also know the Spirit of God. He has opened our eyes. He is our Comforter. He it is that brings us near to God. Thus we know, personally, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is no exception to this rule in all the family of love. The prophet says they shall all know Him, from the least to the greatest; that is to say, from the new-born believer up to the full-grown saint, they all know the Lord. The descriptions given may relate to their littleness or greatness in grace, or they may refer to their littleness or greatness in ability, position, or usefulness, but they all know the Lord. The regenerate man with one talent knows the Lord; the man with ten talents boasts not of them, but rejoices that he knows the Lord.

This is the distinguishing mark of the regenerate, that they know the Lord. Every grace that the Spirit has worked in them shows this. Faith is the special mark of God's people, but how shall they believe in Him whom they do not know? “They that know Your name will put their trust in You,” thus their knowledge of God is the basis of their faith in Him. All God's people love Him supremely, but we cannot love a God whom we do not know. In proportion as our knowledge increases towards God, our love to Him burns more and more brightly. God is our hope, our confidence, our expectation, but we can have no hope in an unknown God. The knowledge of God lies at the bottom of every virtue and grace. The Lord is no more to us a stranger of whom we have heard—of whom a report has come to us through many hands. No; the Lord God is our Friend. We hold high conversation with Him every day, we walk with Him, we delight in Him; He is our exceeding joy. This, in a large degree, is true of all those with whom the grace of God has dealt, to bring them under His covenant, and to give them new hearts and right spirits—they all know the Lord from the least even unto the greatest.

II. And this leads me to the second point, whereon I ask your earnest attention, THE ONE GRAND MEANS OF OBTAINING THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. Here it is—“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Do you get the idea? The clearest knowledge of God comes out of pardoned sin. The most distinct, vivid, assured knowledge of Jehovah comes to us when our iniquity is blotted out, and our sin is covered.

Just think a little. *Without the pardon of sin it is not possible for us to know the Lord*. We run away from Him, we do not want to know Him. Like father Adam, we hide away among the trees of the garden; we do not desire to see our Maker, for we have offended Him. The thought of God is distasteful to every guilty man. It would be good news to him if he could be informed, on sure authority, that there was no God at all. He cannot know God, because his whole heart, and mind, and spirit are in such a state that he is incapable of knowing and appreciating the Holy One of Israel. Darkness covers the mind, because sin has blinded the soul to all that is best and holiest. The lover of sin does not know God, and does not want to know Him.

While sin lies at the door, there is a difficulty on God's part, too. How can He admit into an intimate knowledge of Himself the guilty man, as long as he is enamored of evil? Shall the great king entertain rebels? Shall two walk together, except they be agreed? “God is angry with the wicked every day.” He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Hence the guilty man is, by reason of his own impurity of nature, and by reason of the holy nature of God, shut out from all knowledge of God.

Beyond this, an awful dread comes over the guilty mind, even when it begins to be awakened. Conscience testifies that God must punish sin. It matters not what controversy may be raised over that question; conscience, which makes cowards of us all, assures us that sin cannot go unpunished. I have heard

a great many arguments about the future of the impenitent, but I am sure of this, that God has ingrained it in our nature to believe that He will not spare the guilty. Down deep in the soul of the most hardened unbeliever there is that conviction. You have only to let him lie long enough on a sickbed and gaze into eternity, and he is forced to confess it, whether he likes to do so or not. Now, while that dread is on a man he does not want to know God, and he even becomes incapable of knowing Him. But as the prodigal best knew his father when he had been received in love, so does man best know God when his sin is put away. When sin is forgiven communion is commenced; sin is the great stone which lies at the door, and when this is rolled away we enter in and see God.

But, beloved, we now speak of a matter which we have proved by experience—in *the pardon of sin there is made to the pardoned man a clear and unmistakable revelation of God to his own soul*. I venture to say that there is a clearer revelation of God to the individual in the forgiveness of his sin than can be found anywhere else. God is to be seen in nature. Who among us would wish to question it? Walk abroad, and look around you, and above you, and behold your God! But while men are under the dominion of sin, nature does not reveal God to them; their eyes are held and they will not perceive Him. The most eminent students of nature have some of them remained without the discovery of a God. The same is true of providence. God comes very close to many men by preserving their lives from imminent peril, or by providing them with things necessary in the moment of great need, and yet we have known men living in the center of wondrous providences, and they have only thought themselves lucky fellows, or clever persons, and so have traced God's mercy to chance or self. And let me go a little further. The revelation which God has made in this Holy Book, though it is an eminently clear and heavenly revelation, does not bring the personal assurance to man which comes by pardon of sin. Many have read the book from their childhood, and know large portions of it by heart, and yet they have never seen God in His own Word. But let me tell you, if you have ever felt the guilt and burden of sin, and God has come to you and brought you to the Savior's feet, and you have looked up and seen the great Sacrifice, and put your trust in Him, and the Spirit has borne witness with your spirit that your sins and your iniquities have been forgiven you—then you know the Lord with emphasis and beyond all doubt. In such a discovery of the Godhead there is a joyful conviction, an absolute certainty, a more than mathematical demonstration. The knowledge of God received by a distinct sense of pardoned sin is more certain than knowledge derived by the use of the senses in things pertaining to this life.

This personal manifestation has about it a singular glory of overwhelming self-evidence. Did you ever notice, when reading the Scripture, how sometimes God makes the pardon of sin the proof of His Deity? In the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah you will see how God, through the prophet, laughs at the false gods. He makes sport of the wooden deities. "The smith with the tongs both works in the coals, and fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. The carpenter stretches out his rule; he marks it out with a line." All this is sacred sarcasm against the false gods. But when Jehovah comes to prove that He is the true God, what does He say? Read verse twenty-two of that same chapter—"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you." Here He does not quote the creation of the heavens and the earth, or the working of miracles of power, but to a sinful people He makes this the master proof, "I have blotted out your sins." Did any of the gods of the heathen forgive sins? These things that are made of carved work and gilt by the carpenter, and the goldsmith, did they ever blot out iniquity? Did they ever pretend to do so? Jehovah's Godhead is proved by His forgiveness of sin, and it is so proved to all who receive that pardon.

Look again, and see how God calls men to Himself to receive salvation because He is God. See Isaiah 45:22, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." He alone is God, and therefore they are bidden to look to Him for salvation. As He proved His Godhead by salvation, so now He proves salvation by His Godhead. The two are bound up in one bundle. Let the burdened sinner see how they are joined together.

In the thirty-third chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles, let me read to you concerning Manasseh, who had shed innocent blood very much, "Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and

carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.*” When Jehovah pardoned him, then the great sinner knew that Jehovah was God. There is no evidence like it. Infinite mercy personally received is a demonstration of the Godhead.

The church of God, when she was in her praiseful frame of mind, and full of joy, what do you think was her song? Micah 7:18 gives it to us—“Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains not His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Hallelujah! Who is a God like unto You? We wonder more at the God of pardons than at the God of thunders. There is a more vivid apprehension of the Godhead in obtaining mercy than in beholding works of power.

Beloved, you must bear with me a minute or two while I speak upon this delightful theme. I should just like a week in which to preach from this text, and then I should need another month. How a man sees God when he comes to know in his own soul *the fullness of pardon* intended by this matchless word, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”! Can this be so? Does the Lord make a clean sweep of all my sins? Can it be that the Lord has cast them all behind His back? Has He blotted out the record which accused me? Has He cast my sin into the depths of the sea? Hallelujah! He is a God indeed. This is a God-like act. O Jehovah! Who is like unto You? When I know my sin to be forgiven, I need no one to say to me, “Know the Lord,” the fullness of His pardon has made Him known.

Mark, also, *how freely*, out of His mere love, the Lord forgives, and herein displays His Godhead! No payment on our part, of suffering or service, is required. The Lord pardons for His own name’s sake. He blots out sin because He delights in mercy. This is like a God. I know Him, I rejoice in Him, since He has so freely pardoned me.

When the soul comes to think of *the method of mercy*, it has a further knowledge of God. There is a great point in this. Conscience inquires—“If God forgives me, can He do it justly? Can He forgive consistently with His character and His position as the great moral Governor?” We see that He has set forth a propitiation, that He has provided a great sacrifice by which He can be just and yet the justifier of him that believes. Herein is wisdom. We spell over the revelation, even the word *substitution*. Jesus was made a curse for us. Then we cry out, “Oh, the wisdom of God!” In the extraordinary plan of salvation by grace through Christ Jesus, all the divine attributes are set in a glorious light, and God is made known as never before. Oh, the splendor of redeeming love! Does not every soul that knows the mystery of the cross know the Lord? Jesus says, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.”

Brethren, do not forget the great love which, when the plan was struck out, provided the august person for the working out of that plan! “He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.” When I think that the God who was offended by sin was Himself the sufferer on its account, my thoughts of God are raised far above any height to which the interesting facts of science have elevated them. As I see God in nature, I reverence Him; as I see him in providence, I adore Him; as I see Him in Christ Jesus, pardoning my sin, I know Him.

If you just turn my text over a little, you will perceive another truth, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” To my mind, *the immutability of divine pardon* is one of the most brilliant facets of the diamond. Some think that God forgives, but afterwards punishes; that you may be justified today, but condemned tomorrow. Such is not the teaching of our text. God does not play fast and loose with pardon in that fashion. “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” He will not recollect one of them; they are gone clean out of the divine memory. Of course, it is a figure of speech, since in a certain sense God cannot forget, but as He says that He will not remember, I am content to believe Him. The Lord looks upon the forgiven one as if he had never sinned. Our debts are so fully paid by our Lord Jesus, that there is not an account upon the file of omniscience against any pardoned one. God Himself cannot recall His people’s sin, for He vows that He will remember it no more. Remember how the Lord has said, “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will

pardon them whom I reserve.” If you know this irreversible pardon, my brethren, you know the Lord better than you will ever know Him through gazing at the stars, or cutting through the rocks to the center of the globe. This to you is a manifestation of God of a more powerful and effectual sort than all that you will ever read of or hear of from your fellowmen. If the Lord God this morning not only permits me to speak to you, but if He Himself by His own Spirit applies the pardoning blood of Jesus to you, so that you enjoy a sense of reconciliation, this will put all gospel matters beyond the wash of a doubt; no wave of question can come up so far. If you are made by the Spirit to know that you are accepted in the Beloved—if a sense of that acceptance comes streaming into your soul just as yonder sunshine pours through that window, you will say to yourself, I do indeed know the Lord. That heavenly joy, that “peace of God” will bring to you a full assurance which nothing can disturb. Arguments, words, reasons—these are all the froth of the pot, but real contact with God and conscious enjoyment of the peace-giving power of the Holy Spirit, these are solid food for souls. If God deals with you, my brother, and you know Him, this is sure knowledge. Neither time with its lapse, nor suffering with its fret, nor doubt with its venom, nor death with its terrors, can take from you that certainty of faith which comes with the pardon of sin. If you do not know the Lord by His personal manifestation of Himself in pardoning your sin, I do not wonder that you are easily turned about by every wind of doctrine, but if you do know the Lord by His appearing to you in grace, you are beyond the short-range guns of the enemy. Our memories must fail us, and our senses must leave us before we can doubt the glorious Godhead of our Jehovah. We may be beaten in argument by the sophistries of the new theologians, but we cling to the facts of our experience, and cannot be parted from them. When the God of the Old Testament is decried, we glory in Him, saying, “He has pardoned my sin, and thus He has proved Himself to be God indeed.” Our opponents may turn round and say, “That is no argument to us;” we only reply, “We dare say it is not, but it is argument enough for us, and we must leave you to judge for yourselves. If you will not believe our testimony, we are clear.” May the Lord renew to our souls, from day to day, our sense of pardoned sin, and we shall be happily established in His faith and fear, whatever others may have to say. Oh, how I desire that all my hearers may seek and find this sin-pardoning God in Christ Jesus! Look to your Savior hanging on the tree, bearing the curse that you might be blessed. Look, I say, and you also shall know the Lord. The Lord help you: Amen and amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
PSALM 113; JEREMIAH 31:31-37**

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—63, 195, 229

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